

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

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S E C R E T MANILA 2861

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, RP, MY, ID, SA

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MARCOS' RELATIONS WITH ISLAMIC STATES

REF: MANILA 2789

1. WHEN I MET WITH SAUDI ARABIAN MINISTER SAQQAF
EVENING MARCH 11, HE SAID HE WAS ENJOYING HIMSELF IN MANILA
"DOING NOTHING." HE HAD DEFINITELY DECIDED NOT TO GO
TO JOLO, SO HE WAS STAYING IN THE PALACE RECEIVING
DELEGATIONS AND PETITIONS.

2. MOST OF THE PETITIONS WERE FROM PEOPLE ("NOT MUSLIMS")
WHO WERE ATTEMPTING TO CONVINCE HIM THAT MARCOS AND HIS
ADMINISTRATION WERE PLANNING TO ERADICATE THE MUSLIMS. MOST
OF THE DELEGATIONS WERE MUSLIMS WHO WERE BROUGHT TO HIM BY
THE MARCOS ADMINISTRATION TRYING TO CONVINCE HIM THAT MARCOS
IS HELPING THE MUSLIMS AND IS GENUINELY SYMPATHETIC WITH
THEIR PLIGHT.

3. SAQQAF SAID HIS OWN VIEW IS THAT MARCOS IS SINCERE, BUT
THAT MANY OF THE MILITARY AND SOME OF HIS "CHRISTIAN BROTHERS"
ARE NOT. HE SAW NO RPT NO EVIDENCE OF COMMUNIST ACTION IN
THE MUSLIM AREAS. THE MARCOS PEOPLE HAD BROUGHT HIM A GROUP
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OF TWENTY WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO CONVINCE HIM OF THE "MAOIST"

ASSOCIATION. ONLY THREE OF THEM WOULD SPEAK, ALTHOUGH HE WAS SURE THEY ALL COULD TALK ENGLISH. HE OPINED THAT "SOMEONE MUST BE PRESSING THEM TO STAY SILENT," BUT COULDN'T GUESS WHO IT WAS.

4. HE SAID "WE SAVED THE PHILIPPINES AT LAHORE." OTHERS WANTED TO CUT OFF OIL, AID, AND EVERYTHING ELSE. THE SAUDIS WOULD REMAIN OPPOSED TO SUCH DRASTIC ACTION, "BUT THE FIGHTING MUST STOP." IF THE FIGHTING FLARES UP AGAIN, THEN "SOME OF THE ISLAMIC NEIGHBORS WILL TAKE ACTION.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SAQQAF MENTIONED NEWSWEEK ARTICLE ON MUSLIM PROBLEM, HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT AP STORY WHICH ZEITLIN FILED MARCH 10 BREAKING THE WHOLE QUESTION OF MALAYSIAN INVOLMENT INTO THE OPEN. I HAVE YET TO FIND OUT WHO BRIEFED ZEITLIN, BUT I ASSUME IT MUST HAVE BEEN A TOP OFFICIAL SUCH AS MELCHOR, WHO WAS ACTING WITH THE PRESIDENT'S CONSENT. THIS DECISION TO TAKE ON THE MALAYSIANS PUBLICLY COULD BE THE BEGINNING OF A BAD SITUATION WHICH MAY BECOME WORSE DURING SAQQAF'S VISIT HERE.
SULLIVAN

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